bookboon.com

Assertiveness

Re-claim your assertive birthright

Eric Garner

Download free books at

bookboon.com

Eric Garner

Assertiveness

Re-claim your assertive birthright

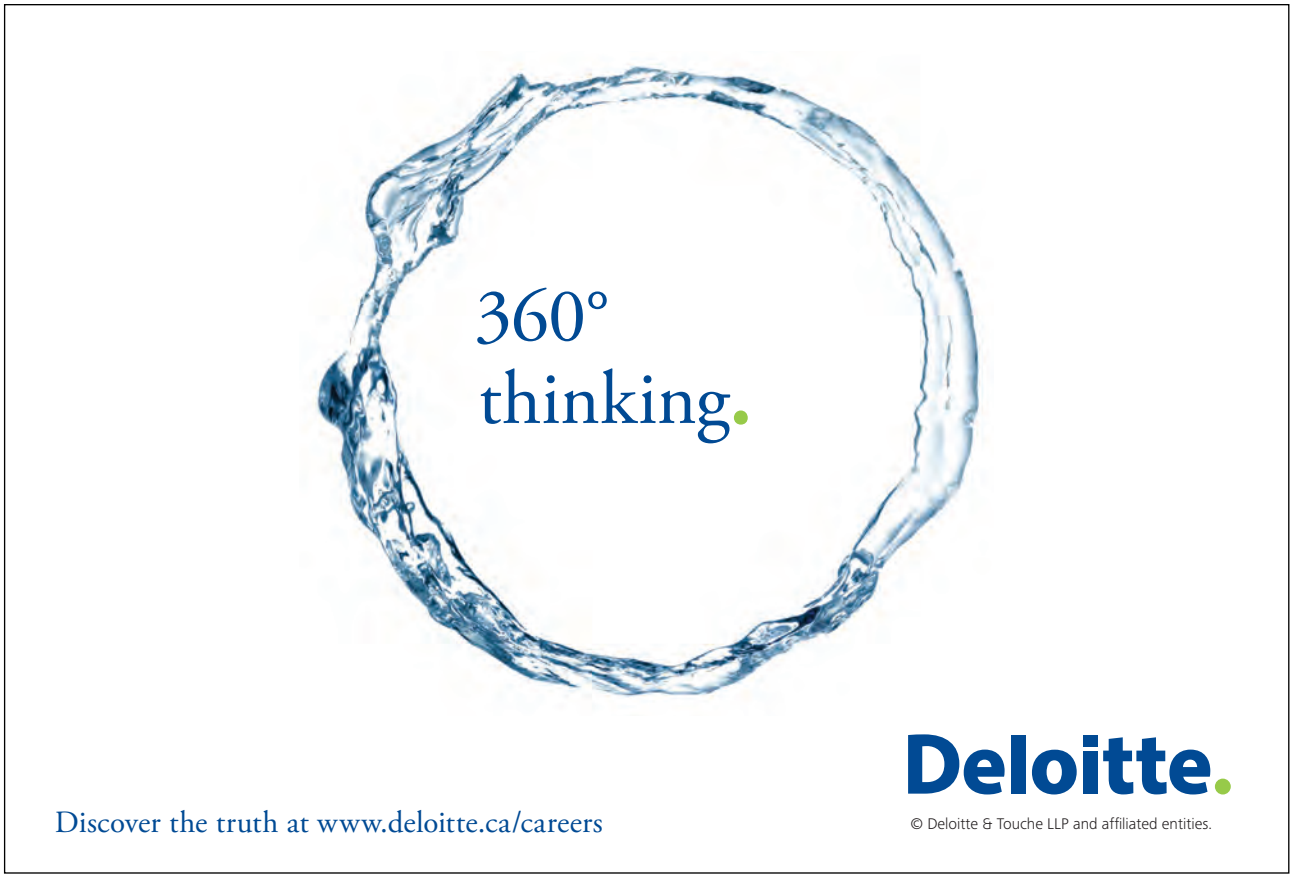
Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Assertiveness: Re-claim your assertive birthright
© 2012 Eric Garner & bookboon.com
ISBN 978-87-7681-964-4

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Contents

	Preface	**9**
1	**What Is Assertiveness?**	**10**
1.1	Dictionary Definitions	10
1.2	Origins	10
1.3	The Assertive Journey	10
1.4	Your Self-Esteem	11
1.5	The Confidence Lane	11
1.6	The Three Modes	11
1.7	What Assertiveness is Not	13
1.8	Outcomes	13
1.9	Benefits	13
1.10	Key Points	14
2	**The Origins of Assertiveness**	**15**
2.1	The Assertive Child	15
2.2	The Protective Parent	15
2.3	Our Early Years' Programming	16
2.4	To Stay the Same or Change?	18
2.5	Key Points	18



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

3	**Facets of Assertiveness**	**19**
3.1	Winning and Losing	19
3.2	Assertive Rights	19
3.3	Acting Assertively	21
3.4	Speaking Assertively	21
3.5	Problem-Solving	22
3.6	Being Nice	23
3.7	Natural Assertion	23
3.8	Key Points	24
4	**Applications of Assertiveness**	**25**
4.1	Responding to Compliments	25
4.2	Responding to Criticism	25
4.3	Saying "No" to Others	26
4.4	Overcoming Shyness	27
4.5	Admitting You're Wrong	27
4.6	Raising Your Self-Esteem	27
4.7	Expressing Your Feelings	27
4.8	Key Points	27
5	**Assertive Communication**	**28**
5.1	Own Your Communication	28

MSM
MAASTRICHT SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
Increase your impact with MSM Executive Education
For almost 60 years Maastricht School of Management has been enhancing the management capacity of professionals and organizations around the world through state-of-the-art management education.
Our broad range of Open Enrollment Executive Programs offers you a unique interactive, stimulating and multicultural learning experience.
Be prepared for tomorrow's management challenges and apply today.
For more information, visit www.msm.nl or contact us at +31 43 38 70 808 or via admissions@msm.nl
the globally networked management school

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

5.2	Describe, Don't Judge	28
5.3	Be Specific, not Generalized	28
5.4	Three Words to Eliminate from Your Communication	28
5.5	Making Requests	28
5.6	Asking for Time	29
5.7	Fogging	30
5.8	Broken Record	30
5.9	Constructive Feedback	30
5.10	Key Points	31
6	**Managing Assertively**	**32**
6.1	Co-operation not Confrontation	33
6.2	Diversity not Sameness	33
6.3	Fairness not Favouritism	33
6.4	Power to Do, not Power to Impress	33
6.5	Openness not Secrecy	33
6.6	Leaders not just Managers	33
6.7	Integrity not Dictatorship	34
6.8	Outdated Models	34
6.9	New Modsels	34
6.10	Key Points	35

See the light!
The sooner you realize we are right, the sooner your life will get better!

A bit over the top? Yes we know!

We are just that sure that we can make your media activities more effective.

Get "Bookboon's Free Media Advice"
Email kbm@bookboon.com

bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

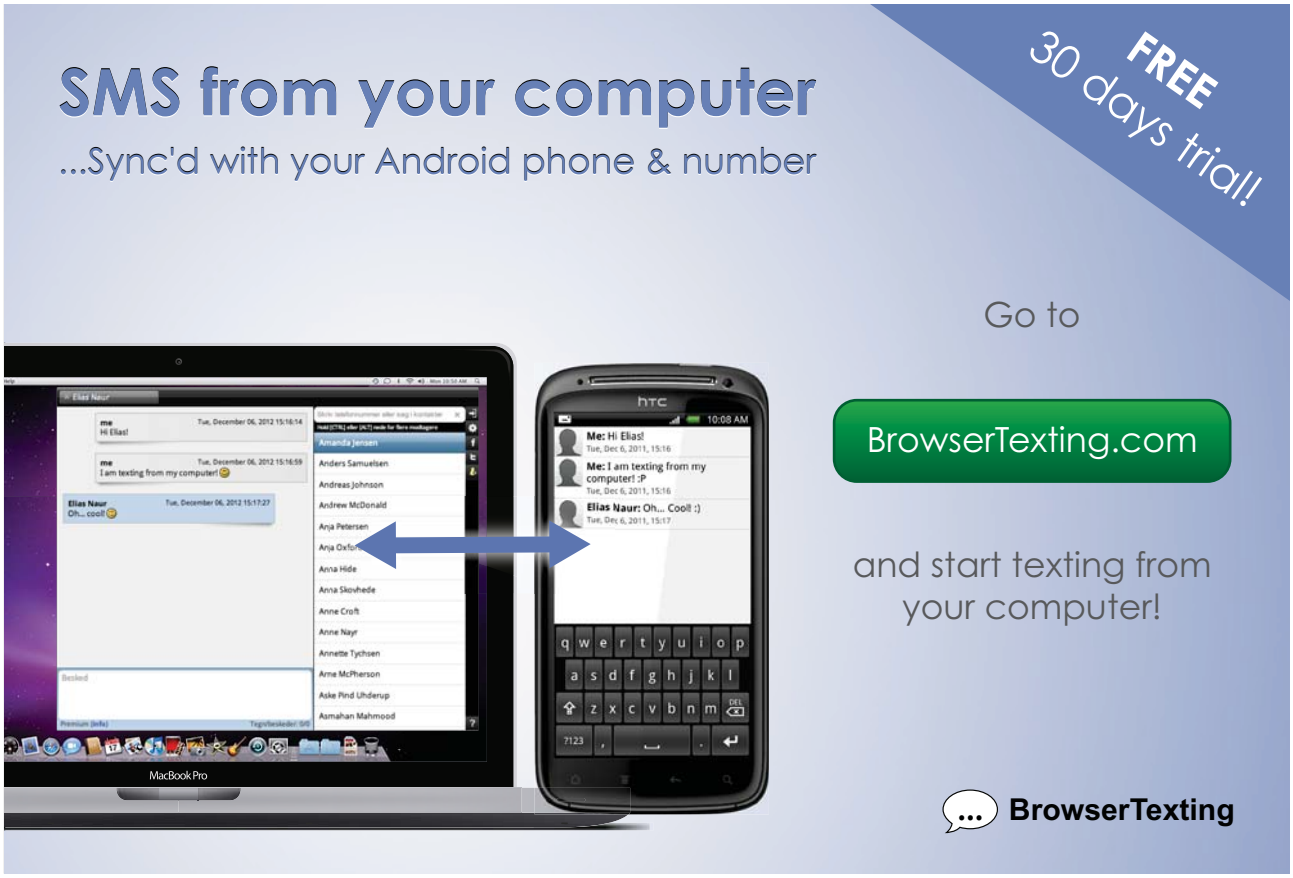
7	**Managing Conflict**	**36**
7.1	Avoidance	36
7.2	Direct Aggression	36
7.3	Accommodation	37
7.4	Assertiveness	37
7.5	Key Points	38
8	**Social Confidence**	**39**
8.1	Conversational Openers	39
8.2	Keeping a Conversation Going	39
8.3	Active Listening	39
8.4	Positive Feedback	40
8.5	Safe Disclosure	40
8.6	Presenting Yourself	40
8.7	Avoiding Controversy	40
8.8	Key Points	41
9	**Assertive Roles at Work**	**42**
9.1	The Assertive Appraiser	42
9.2	The Assertive Boss	42
9.3	The Assertive Chairperson	42
9.4	The Assertive Communicator	42

I WANT TO CHANGE DIRECTION,
AND THE WORLD.
GOT-THE-ENERGY-TO-LEAD.COM
We believe that energy suppliers should be renewable, too. We are therefore looking for enthusiastic new colleagues with plenty of ideas who want to join RWE in changing the world. Visit us online to find out what we are offering and how we are working together to ensure the energy of the future.
RWE
The energy to lead

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

9.5	The Assertive Customer-Carer	42
9.6	The Assertive Recruiter	42
9.7	The Assertive Team Leader	42
9.8	The Assertive Negotiator	43
9.9	The Assertive Employee	43
9.10	Key Points	43
10	**Assertiveness Training**	**44**
10.1	Watch Your Self-Talk	45
10.2	Use the ABC Technique	45
10.3	Set a New Trigger	45
10.4	Anchors	46
10.5	Musts into Preferences	46
10.6	Hold On Tightly...	46
10.7	Work on Your Self-Esteem	46
10.8	Practise Affirmations	47
10.9	Practise Visualisations	47
10.10	Get a Role Model	48
10.11	Scripting	48
10.12	Key Points	48
	Web Resources on Assertiveness	**49**



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

Preface

Introduction to Assertiveness

Assertiveness is one of the most important skills you can learn today. It can be used in almost any situation at work as well as in your home and social life. Assertiveness changes the way you communicate, changes the way you deal with conflict, and changes your own relationship with yourself. It is the gateway to confidence, respect, and self-esteem. As you will learn in this book, assertiveness is something you are born with and naturally good at. Only the intervention of others with your best interests at heart rob you of assertiveness and teach you unsatisfactory substitutes, such as submission and aggression. But assertiveness is always waiting for you to re-discover its magic. If you are someone who feels they have lost their way in their relations with others, this book will show you how to claim back your birthright.

Profile of Author Eric Garner

Eric Garner is an experienced management trainer with a knack for bringing the best out of individuals and teams. Eric founded ManageTrainLearn in 1995 as a corporate training company in the UK specialising in the 20 skills that people need for professional and personal success today. Since 2002, as part of KSA Training Ltd, ManageTrainLearn has been a major player in the e-learning market. Eric has a simple mission: to turn ManageTrainLearn into the best company in the world for producing and delivering quality online management products.

Profile of ManageTrainLearn

ManageTrainLearn is one of the top companies on the Internet for management training products, materials, and resources. Products range from training course plans to online courses, manuals to teambuilder exercises, mobile management apps to one-page skill summaries and a whole lot more. Whether you're a manager, trainer, or learner, you'll find just what you need at ManageTrainLearn to skyrocket your professional and personal success.
http://www.managetrainlearn.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

1 What Is Assertiveness?

Although it is a staple of many training and self-development courses, it is not always easy to define Assertiveness. That's because it has many facets. It is a process, a skill, and a way of behaving. In communicating, it is more easily defined by its absence and its alternative ways of behaving, such as aggression and submission. But Assertiveness is a key quality in all positive and productive relationships and a skill that we should all learn to know better.

Here are some of the main ways to define it.

1.1 Dictionary Definitions

The dictionary definitions of "assertiveness" have a range of descriptions that don't quite capture the essence of Assertiveness. You'll read "dogmatic", "forthright", "positive", "confident" and "insistent". Don't be fooled. These are only starting points. Assertiveness is much more than any of these.

1.2 Origins

One clue to the meaning of Assertiveness lies in its origins. Assertiveness came to most people's awareness in the late 20th century in connection with movements such as Civil Rights in America, the women's movement, and the self-development movement. These were all non-forceful movements and they were all successful in changing the rights of under-privileged groups.

1.3 The Assertive Journey

Writer Beverley Hare describes Assertiveness in terms of a journey. Her own personal journey to assertiveness took her from low self-esteem to high self-esteem; from dependence to interdependence; from believing she was unattractive to knowing she was attractive. Her journey to assertiveness was a life-changing and life-enhancing experience. This was her journey...

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

- from low self-esteem to improved self-esteem
- from little confidence to improved confidence
- from believing she was unintelligent to believing she was intelligent
- from believing she was unattractive to believing she was attractive
- from dependence to independence
- from feeling passive to feeling active
- from predominantly non-assertive to predominantly assertive behaviour
- from obsessive dependent relationships to interdependent relationships
- from being sensitive to criticism to handling criticism well

1.4 Your Self-Esteem

A high level of self-esteem has now become an essential requirement of modern business life. Unlike the past models of business life, where people at work were required to know their place and look up to those above and down on those below, today's businesses require co-operation, equality, and respect for diversity. One of the skills that takes you there is self-esteem, the appreciation of your own worth and importance. And Assertiveness is one of the daily habits that will produce self-esteem.

"High self-esteem workers making independent decisions, taking risks, vigorously pursuing new ideas and acting on their own initiative are exactly the employees needed for the 21st century." (BBC Health)

1.5 The Confidence Lane

Assertiveness, self-esteem and confidence are inextricably linked.

For example, when you know that you have a right to be in your place in the world, to occupy the space you are in, and the right to express what you want, you are both thinking and behaving assertively and confidently.

Imagine a 3-lane highway, labelled respectively "Weakness", "Confidence", and "Dominance". When you drive along the inside lane of letting others walk all over you, you know you're in the slow lane of Weakness and it's time to step up into a better lane. When you find yourself driving along the outside lane of overtaking everyone else with your power, you know you're in the high-speed lane of Dominance and it's time to step down. Use your dashboard gauge of awareness and feedback to stay in the middle lane of Confidence and your journey will be successful for both you and others.

1.6 The Three Modes

The classic way to define Assertiveness is to contrast it with its two "side-kicks", aggression and submissiveness. Aggression is easily defined as a way of behaving that denies other people's rights. Submissiveness is equally easily defined as a way of behaving that denies us our own rights. That leaves Assertiveness as the "third way of behaving" that simultaneously acknowledges our own rights and those of others.

A.J.Lange and P.Jakubowski, in their book "Responsible Assertive Behaviour" provide a definition of Assertiveness in which it is compared to aggression and non-assertion.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

1. Non-assertion is violating one's own rights by failing to express honest feelings, thoughts and beliefs and consequently allowing others to violate oneself.
2. Aggression is directly standing up for personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in a way which is often dishonest, usually inappropriate and always violates the rights of the other person.
3. Assertiveness is standing up for personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest and appropriate ways which do not violate another person's rights.

1.6.1 Aggressive Behaviour

Aggressive behaviour means...

- getting your own way, no matter what
- winning at all costs
- being loud, abusive, controlling, manipulative, intimidating, violent, sarcastic
- using put-downs of others
- using any trick or game to show others are weaker than you.

While in many parts of our society the aggressive type is admired for their strength, the aggressive person is basically a coward at heart. Their behaviour towards others is likely to create a resentment-revenge cycle which will re-bound on them one day.

1.6.2 Non-Assertion

Non-assertive or passive behaviour means...

- keeping quiet for fear of upsetting others
- avoiding conflict at any cost
- putting others' needs ahead of your own
- being vague about your own needs
- excessive apologising
- pretending to be indecisive as a way of taking a different stand
- bottling things up.

The person who relies on passive behaviour does so in the hope that they will be safe and protected by others. There is every likelihood that others will despise their weakness and soon come to lose respect for them. The passive person may become bitter in later life for lost opportunities.

1.6.3 Assertive Behaviour

Assertive behaviour means...

- being open, honest and vulnerable
- standing up for yourself
- refusing to be intimidated

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

- finding win-win solutions to conflict
- being equal with others while retaining your uniqueness
- listening to others
- showing understanding.

While on the surface an assertive lifestyle seems to carry with it many dangers - the possibility that others will knock you down in flames for being so open and honest - it is the only route to personal respect and respect for others.

1.7 What Assertiveness is Not

In learning to be more confident and assertive, many people overdo the effect and slip into aggressively-expressed assertions. Equally, many people who aim to be assertive, step back from conflict in case they infringe other people's rights.

Assertiveness is not about dominating, resisting, or feeling forced to yield to others. It is never about becoming emotional and angry. Nor is it about forcing your point of view onto other people.

What assertiveness does aim to do is to emphasise the value of clear, calm, frank and often minimal communication as a means of establishing relationships in which everyone knows where they stand and no-one feels ill-used.

1.8 Outcomes

One of the touchstones of Assertiveness is that it is a way of being that is without fear. When you operate from predominantly aggressive and submissive standpoints, you are really operating from standpoints of fear: the fear of others that makes you want to dominate them or submit to them. Assertiveness, on the other hand, is honest, calm, and trusting. It does not come from a place of fear, but of trust and respect.

1.9 Benefits

The reason why Assertiveness matters is that it is the key that unlocks success in so many areas of our lives. In the workplace, it underlies so many of the skills we use in relating to others, such as communication, negotiating, and leadership. In personal relationships, it is the best way to solve problems and manoeuvre our way out of conflict. In ourselves, it is the way to feel good about our lives.

One of the key benefits of Assertiveness is that it helps you eliminate the fear and stress which still today are present in many of our life and work relationships, be they demanding bosses, angry customers, or unhelpful colleagues. Fear and stress-based relationships create different forms of flight-fight reactions in us. These can take the form of avoiding people, giving in to them, battling them, bullying them, or manipulating them. All these routes lead to unease, disease, and ultimate exhaustion. With Assertiveness skills, you learn that fear doesn't have to exist in any relationship you choose to have, whatever the other person wants. Assertiveness gives you back personal control that allows you to act rather than react and to see everyone else the way you see yourself. With love and respect.

Assertiveness is a prime social skill. It may not be as quick at resolving issues as forceful dominance or quiet submission. But it is the route to the most healthy and satisfactory of human behaviours.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

1.10 Key Points

1. There are more than 250 ways to define words such as assertion, aggression and non-assertion.
2. One of the results of assertiveness at work is that fear is eliminated and communication is more honest.
3. Assertiveness allows you to stand back from situations that you are involved in.
4. Assertiveness leads to an increase in respect: respect for yourself and respect for others.
5. Assertiveness is a way of looking at life that replaces dogmatic certainties with openness and possibilities.
6. Assertiveness can be applied across a range of life situations.

**Who is your target group?
And how can we reach them?**

At Bookboon, you can segment the exact right audience for your advertising campaign.

Our eBooks offer in-book advertising spot to reach the right candidate.

Contact us to hear more
kbm@bookboon.com

bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

2 The Origins of Assertiveness

Assertiveness is your birth right. It is the kind of person you were born to be. If you think about yourself as a new-born baby, you'll know that your instinctive way of relating to the world around you was one of love, openness and honesty. That's why others were loving, open and honest in return. However, things didn't stay this way for long. As soon as your thinking brain kicked in, those around you started to fear for you. They saw dangers that you didn't see and they, naturally, wanted to protect you. That's when they started to teach you the strategies that they believed would keep you safe throughout your life. In this way, they trained you to behave in ways that were non-assertive. But your Assertiveness didn't disappear. It simply went underground waiting for the day when you could re-claim it as your birthright.

Let's look at how things start and then go wrong.

2.1 The Assertive Child

If you look at a baby, you'll see all you ever need to know about how assertive you can be. A baby is unconditionally trusting; expresses its needs freely; and is endlessly curious and joyful about the world. A baby lives totally in the present and is free from a self-centred ego. A baby knows no fears; it knows only love.

As babies,...

- we are able to express our needs freely
- we trust others unconditionally
- we are innocently allowed to be ourselves
- we are wide-eyed and endlessly curious about our world
- we have fun, laughter and play
- we are instinctively creative
- we can express our feelings out loud whether joy or sadness
- we live totally in the present
- we have a potential for growth.

2.2 The Protective Parent

In the early years of our lives, our thinking brains are undeveloped. We function from the instinctive brain that doesn't analyse, interpret, or stress. However, around the age of 2 or 3, our thinking brains start to assert their power over our lives, egged on by all those around us who have our best interests at heart.

We start to learn patterns of behaviour that are designed to protect us from a world that we are repeatedly told is hostile. Our freedom is restricted by do's and don'ts. Our playfulness in the present is replaced by punishment for wrong-doing. Honest communication about our needs and wants is replaced by a raft of non-honest communication to get what we want. In the process, we learn that blame and shame are the ways that the world works.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

It is natural for the parent to believe that he (or she) knows best. After all, he has more experience of life than the child, he "knows" more than the child and he has a more developed, if not necessarily better, thinking brain than the child. As a result, the parent rejects much of what has hitherto made the child the complete and perfect being it was. Out goes satisfaction of every need and in comes negotiation over the meeting of needs. Out goes free and honest communication and in comes guarded and manipulative communication. Out goes unconditional love and in comes love on other peoples' terms.

"No father dog mercilessly bites its puppy to break its will; mother dogs don't shame their pups for dirty coats; no bird is criticised after its first faltering flight. Only we humans use such "advanced" learning methods." (Adapted from Ken Keyes)

2.3 Our Early Years' Programming

As a result of these early years' training, we develop a range of life strategies that we believe are necessary to survive in a hostile world.

They include the following 5 programmes:

2.3.1 The Blame Programme

In a hostile world, the name of the game is to work out how to survive while keeping the love of those around us. One of the ways we do this is the Blame Game. When we do something that risks losing the love of those around us, we seek to get this love back either by blaming others or blaming ourselves. In one fell swoop, we learn to be aggressive or submissive. In time, we work out which of these two strategies works best and, from then on, use it whenever we can.

2.3.2 The False Self Programme

When we lose the true self of babyhood, we create a new self, based on survival. We learn that "might is right" and that avoiding punishment is better than being found out. Our thinking brains take over our lives, creating an ego that has a field day working out just what it needs to do to come out on top. This thinking brain creates a false self which, some people believe, is the root cause of much of our unhappiness throughout our lives.

Some of the beliefs of the False Self programme are...

1. forgiveness is weakness
2. you change others by criticising them
3. your anger shows you're right and others are wrong
4. revenge helps you to establish justice
5. it is weakness to ever let yourself be vulnerable
6. judging others proves what a good character you are
7. you protect yourself by attacking people and/or withdrawing love in order to control them through fear, guilt and shame
8. manipulating and deceiving others can help you to become successful.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

2.3.3 The OK Options Programme

If we imagine a matrix of four squares based on how we feel about ourselves and how we feel about other people, there are four possible options:

a) we can feel OK about ourselves but not about others: the aggressive mode
b) we can feel OK about others but not about ourselves: the submissive mode
c) we can feel not OK about others nor about ourselves: the depressive mode
d) we can feel OK about others and ourselves: the assertive mode.

Unfortunately, for much of our growing-up years, the assertive OK-OK mode often gets suppressed. But, have heart. It's still there and always will be.

2.3.4 The False Life Script Programme

As a result of our choices in our early years, between OK options, the choices in the blame game, and the machinations of our ego-driven thinking brains, we will create a personality that others see as being who we are. We are then labelled according to this personality. We can be Quiet Eric, or Solemn Sue, or Happy-Go-Lucky Henry. This identity becomes our passport to life. Limited and false though it is, it is who we believe ourselves to be.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

2.3.5 The Personality Type Programme

By the time our early years are at an end, we will have developed a predominant personality type that reflects the world view that we have been taught. In the personality typology known as the Enneagram, these personality types split into 9 types and are the ways we predominantly react to life situations, in particular, stress and danger. These types include the winner, the perfectionist, the peacemaker, the rebel, the self-doubter, and the observer. These personalities define who we are and how we behave in all situations with others.

2.4 To Stay the Same or Change?

By the time we reach adulthood, we each have it in us to act aggressively, non-assertively or assertively. Initially, we will unconsciously select a route that fits the survival, life-script and belief programmes of our Adult persona. Some of us may convince ourselves that the false self options of Aggression and Non-assertion will give us what we want in life. Others may seek to re-claim their Assertive birthright. None of us are ever likely to be wholly in one of the three modes. At our best, we will be able to move effortlessly between all three modes, always making sensible choices to suit our situations. In reality, most of us will find aggression and non-assertion easy but unsatisfactory options while assertiveness has to be consciously learnt and continually practised.

Our early years define who we are but they also condemn us to a life that is dominated by our ego brains and our false life script programming. All the while, there is a nagging doubt that this is not who we really are. Only when we learn to throw off the shackles of our programming and become the real assertive us again can we really re-discover our true selves.

2.5 Key Points

1. The origin of our different modes of behaviour as human beings lies in the way our brains work.
2. The evolution of the human brain results in three different modes of behaviour: the child, the parent and the adult.
3. The seat of our aggressive and non-assertive modes of behaviour lies in the instinctive parts of the old brain.
4. As babies, we are fully assertive in the way we express our needs and relate to the world.
5. As we grow, our thinking brains teach us to see the world as potentially hostile.
6. To protect ourselves as we grow, we learn fear and anger, blame and punishment, manipulation and deceit.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

3 Facets of Assertiveness

Assertiveness has many facets. It is a way of behaving. It is a way of thinking. It is also a way of resolving conflict. These different facets are like the faces of a diamond; they reflect different views of the same thing. Here are the main facets of the Assertiveness diamond.

3.1 Winning and Losing

In every situation in which we have to work with others, it is primarily our thoughts and perceptions that influence our behaviour. These can centre around positive and winning interpretations of life or negative and losing ones. Winning and losing options seem to be at the very heart of the way we run our societies. Our legal, judicial, political and governmental systems are strongly adversarial. They are about either-or choices. "If you are not for me, you must be against me." Because of this, many people develop conditional winning perceptions of life, ie for me to win, others must lose. These result in aggressive, competitive and manipulative strategies. Others develop losing perceptions of life, ie I'm not as good, clever, strong or popular as he is, therefore he is better than me. These result in non-assertive strategies.

3.2 Assertive Rights

Assertive rights are one of the trademarks of the assertive movement. These are not legal rights but basic human rights. They are not written down but stem from any situation you find yourself in. They include: the right to say No to things you don't want to do; the right to be heard with respect; the right to stay quiet; the right to change your mind; the right to make mistakes. The unassertive person dares not have these rights. The aggressive person demands them for themselves but not for others.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

3.2.1 My Bill of Rights

You may share the following set of general assertive rights which can apply to any situation you find yourself in.

1. I have the right to be treated with respect as an intelligent, capable and equal human being.
2. I have the right to express my feelings.
3. I have the right to express my own opinions and values.
4. I have the right to say "yes" and "no" for myself.
5. I have the right to make mistakes without feeling worthless.
6. I have the right to change my mind.
7. I have the right to say I don't understand.
8. I have the right to ask for what I want.
9. I have the right to decline responsibility for other people's problems.
10. I have the right to choose to be aggressive and unassertive if it is justified.

3.2.2 The Five Freedoms

The following Five Freedoms are Virginia Satir's version of her Bill of Assertive Rights.

1. I have the freedom to see and hear what is here and now, rather than comply with others' distortions of what was, will be or "should" be - and be safe to share it.
2. I have the freedom to think what I think rather than what I "should" think - and be safe to share it.
3. I have the freedom to feel what I feel, rather than what I "should" feel - and be safe to share it.

With us you can shape the future. Every single day.

For more information go to:
www.eon-career.com

Your energy shapes the future.

e·on

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

4. I have the freedom to want and to choose what I want, rather than what I "should" want - and be safe to share it.
5. And the freedom to imagine my own self-actualization rather than playing a rigid role or always playing it safe - and be safe to share it.

3.2.3 My Job Interview Rights

The following rights will turn a job interview from one in which the interviewer might be seen as having the upper hand into one in which both sides are equal.

1. I have the right to be considered for this job on an equal basis with others.
2. I have the right to be treated respectfully.
3. I have the right to put my best self over.
4. I have the right to believe I can succeed.
5. I have the right to take my time in answering questions.
6. I have the right to feel disappointed if I don't get the job.
7. I have the right to ask for the reasons why I was not selected.
8. I have the right not to be browbeaten, humiliated or interrogated.

3.3 Acting Assertively

If Assertiveness doesn't come easily to you, you can act your way into it. First, think win-win whatever situation you're in. Then, when you are engaged in exchanges with others, relax. Be fluid, real and honest. Ground yourself in the present. Free yourself from fear. Every time you slip into one of the other modes of aggression or submissiveness, simply move yourself back into the open mannerisms of Assertiveness.

Aggression is conveyed by the following body language signals staring; leaning back with hands behind your head; pointing fingers, jabbing pencils at someone; fist-thumping; chin thrust forward; clenched fists; wry smiles; scowling when angry; taking up maximum space; invading other people's space; finger-drumming; striding around impatiently.

Non-assertiveness is conveyed by the following body language signals little or no eye contact; looking down or to one side; expressionless; slumping; sad or fearful expression; shoulders up and tense; hand wringing; hand over face or covering mouth; nervous smile when angry or being criticised; legs wrapped around each other; folded arms.

Assertive behaviour is conveyed by the following body language signals steady eye contact without staring; smiling when pleased, frowning when angry, otherwise open; spontaneous and fluid; open hands; relaxed posture; low level of unnecessary gestures; facial expression reflects feeling being expressed; sitting and standing upright; taking up the appropriate amount of space.

3.4 Speaking Assertively

Just as you can adopt the body language of an assertive person, and in the process become more assertive, so you can practise the speaking tones of an assertive person while recognizing the tones of someone in submissive or aggressive mode.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Aggressive ways of speaking can be recognised when people state opinions as facts, eg "That's rubbish!; use threats, eg "You'd better get it done."; put others down, eg "You cannot be serious."; praise self, criticise others, eg "I knew I should have done it."; use "must", "should", "ought" excessively; place excessive emphasis on words, eg "Everybody should..."; use a voice that is loud, strident, sharp, abrupt, sarcastic and cold.

Non-assertive ways of speaking can be recognised when people make long rambling statements, eg "I don't mean to butt in, but could you possibly...?"; use unnecessary qualifying words, eg "Maybe..."; use filler words, eg "Uh...basically...sort of..."; put themselves down, eg "I seem to be hopeless at this..."; apologise and justify themselves, eg "Sorry, but..."; use phrases which make it easy for others to ignore their needs, eg "It's not really important..."; use a voice that is tentative; hesitant; low; trailing off; inaudible; garbled.

Assertive ways of speaking can be recognised when people make statements that are brief and to the point; use well-considered "I" statements eg "I believe..."; distinguish clearly between fact and opinion, eg "In my experience..."; avoid words like "must", "should" and "ought"; make constructive suggestions, eg "I need time to think. Can we stop?"; use open-ended questions of others, eg "How does this affect you?"; use a voice that is steady, warm, firm, clear, sincere, neither soft nor loud.

Assertive people speak to a purpose. They don't say anything to put others or themselves down. Every time you feel yourself slipping into the rambling, apologetic and hesitant tones of the submissive mode, or the loud, angry, and belligerent tones of the aggressive mode, quietly slip back into the assertive tone of voice.

3.5 Problem-Solving

Tuning in to our assertive rights allows us to handle difficult situations with assertiveness. Let's say you live next door to someone who regularly plays loud music late at night. Your rights to a quiet night's sleep are infringed. You might do nothing and the situation goes unresolved. You might get angry and call the police but your neighbour then gets angry and plots revenge. The assertive route sees you calling on your neighbour and trying to work out a win-win solution to the problem.

3.5.1 An Assertive Sequence

There are various ways to resolve a situation where you feel your rights are being infringed without getting angry or giving in. Here is one using the mnemonic LASSIE. It starts with you outlining the situation to the other person, and follows with:

L for Listen to their point of view
A for Acknowledge what they say
S for Say what you honestly think and feel
S for Say what you would like to happen
I for Indicate what the differences are
E for Explore win-win solutions.

An alternative assertive sequence to LASSIE is the four steps of PFNC: problem; feelings; needs; consequences. In other words, you outline the Problem; you express your Feelings; you state your Needs; you say what the Consequences will be.

An example might be a request to a neighbour to turn down their stereo.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

- Hi, can I speak to you about your stereo. It's been keeping me awake at night. (The Problem)
- I know you enjoy it but I have a problem with it. (Your Feelings)
- You see, I have to get up early in the morning and I would like to get to sleep at night without being disturbed. (Your Needs)
- I would appreciate it if you could either turn it down or move it to somewhere in your flat where I can't hear it or maybe something else. (The Solution or Consequence)

3.6 Being Nice

According to Jo Ellen Grzyb and Robin Chandler, authors of "The Nice Factor Book", it is possible to be too nice for your own good. If you are too attentive, too thoughtful, too agreeable, too understanding, it can make you feel you don't have a choice on how to behave. It can leave you feeling persistently put upon and hard done by. This is not to say that niceness isn't important in the right place and at the right time. But if it is done out of fear of offending, of not being liked or of triggering someone else's anger, it is a liability. Too often nice-meaning people come across as ineffectual, invisible, adaptive and powerless with the feeling they've only themselves to blame. There is however a middle ground between being excessively nice and excessively unpleasant and that is the territory of Assertiveness.

3.7 Natural Assertion

Although assertiveness lacks the heated emotion of the angry aggressive or the trembling fear of the timid submissive, it is not empty of feeling. You can be assertive by letting others know your feelings, for example, in spontaneous outbursts of positive enjoyment. "Great meeting!" "Well done!" "That was an excellent report!"

Do your employees receive the right training?

Bookboon offers an eLibrairy with a wide range of Soft Skill training & Microsoft Office books to keep your staff up to date at all times.

Contact us to hear more
kbm@bookboon.com

bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

The beauty of Assertiveness is that it has two bedfellows - anger and fear - that are not at all like it. No matter what situation you are in, you can always take a rain check on how you are thinking, behaving, or feeling. Then when you know what mode you are in, you can shift yourself and your thoughts, your behavior and voice tone, your feelings and emotions to where you would rather be.

3.8 Key Points

1. Win-win thinking looks for positive outcomes in all of life's situations.
2. General rights for any life situation have become the hallmark of the assertiveness movement.
3. Asserting our rights in any particular life situation, such as a job interview, can increase our self-confidence.
4. You can choose to behave aggressively or non-assertively if you think it is appropriate for the situation.
5. There is no such thing as a good or bad feeling; only a good or bad choice.
6. Assertive people get a feel for the right distance between themselves and others.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

4 Applications of Assertiveness

Many of us don't handle interpersonal relationships well, particularly at work. Instead of feeling good about ourselves, our reactions and responses to others often make us feel tongue-tied and inadequate, on the one hand, and angry and critical on the other. Here are some of the ways to deal with everyday situations and come out feeling good.

4.1 Responding to Compliments

People who have low self-esteem tend to dismiss compliments. Deep down they feel unworthy and are likely to respond to praise with phrases such as, "Who me?" or "It was nothing". You can use three techniques to stop yourself using such self-denigrating replies. First, when someone says something nice about you, simply say "Thanks" in a way that is clear, grateful, and accepting. Secondly, ask people what they liked about what you did. Thirdly, find something in what they said that you can agree with.

4.1.1 Positive Enquiry

Positive enquiry and positive assertion are simple techniques for handling praise and compliments.

Positive enquiry asks the compliment-payer for more details about what they liked.
Them: "I really like your hair today."
You: "Thanks. What is it about my hair that you like?"

Positive assertion takes all or part of the compliment and agrees with it.
Them: "I really thought the presentation went well."
You: "Thanks. Yes, the presentation did go well, didn't it."

4.2 Responding to Criticism

Criticism is another difficult area for non-assertive people. If they tend to aggressive reactions, they might hit back. If they tend to submissive reactions, they might feel even more miserable than before. Criticism isn't easy to take. But there are some rules to follow. First, remember that it is only someone else's opinion. Second, learn not to take it personally. Third, practise the technique of asking for more information so that you can weigh up whether there's something in what they said that will help you to do better next time.

4.2.1 Negative Enquiry

Negative enquiry and negative assertion are simple techniques for responding to criticism and judgment.

Negative enquiry replies to the critic by asking for more details about what they didn't like.
Them: "Well, I've seen better presentations by monkeys."
You: "Exactly what didn't you like about it?"

Negative assertion takes all or part of the criticism and agrees with it.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Them: "The slide show was dreadful."
You: "Yes. That was the most difficult part of the presentation."

This way of dealing with criticism and judgment has an equivalent positive version when handling compliments and praise assertively.

4.3 Saying "No" to Others

Non-assertive people have a hard time saying "No", particularly if the request comes from people they want to impress. But always saying "Yes", regardless of what you want yourself, turns you into a doormat and makes the next request even harder to turn down. The best way to say "No" is to state your "No" up-front, firmly and without fear. Explain that you are unable to meet the request and use the word "won't" rather than "can't" as in: "No, I won't be able to babysit tonight. I have other plans."

The following is an e: mail sent by a manager who had been pressured to join a project which she didn't want to do: "I'd like you to know that I'm honoured that you should have thought about asking me to do this job and under other circumstances I would have loved to be able to say "Yes". It sounds like an interesting project. I'd like you to know that it was kind of you to have considered me. Please let me know how things progress. I'm sure it will be an outstanding success."

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

4.4 Overcoming Shyness

Unassertiveness and shyness are twins. They both lead to feeling inadequate in social settings. As a result, unassertive people hold back and take no part. One trick you can use to make yourself feel more comfortable in unfamiliar settings is to imagine in your mind that you are somewhere safe where you can be yourself, like "Ma and Pa's" or "down the pub".

4.5 Admitting You're Wrong

We all make mistakes but not all of us have the courage to own up to them. However, mistakes are what make us human and not something to be ashamed of. Once you realise a mistake, own up to it simply and concisely without over-apologising or hand-wringing. Then, get to work on putting it right.

4.6 Raising Your Self-Esteem

It is thought that up to 80% of us regularly suffer from low self-esteem. This often happens when we compare ourselves to others who appear to be more confident, more assertive, and more successful than we are. Don't let yourself fall into this trap of your ego. You are no better and no worse than anyone else. You are you, perfect in yourself as you are, and with the same worth and value as anyone else.

4.7 Expressing Your Feelings

A further reason for low self-esteem is the tendency to believe that your views are not as important as other people's. This often happens when you feel you are not as articulate as others in expressing your thoughts and feelings. As a result, you sit and say nothing. This is another trick of your ego to make you feel bad and confirm some old image that you were given as a kid. Put a stop to this and learn to express yourself regardless of what other people think or feel.

Practising assertiveness in everyday situations is the route that will make you more assertive. Have the courage to seize the opportunities as they arise, and your life will change for the better.

4.8 Key Points

1. One of the most valuable applications of assertiveness is in handling interpersonal communications.
2. The best way to respond to praise is to thank the person and accept the praise with humility.
3. When we are criticised, however much it may hurt, we need to remind ourselves it is only someone's opinion.
4. When we want to say "No" to something we are not obliged to do, we need to say "No" clearly and leave it at that.
5. To show social poise, get genuinely interested in others.
6. The most disarming way to handle mistakes is to admit them fully, apologise once and move on.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

5 Assertive Communication

If asked to state where assertiveness can make the biggest difference, most experts would almost certainly say, "in the power of your communication". Assertive communication, whether in word, deed, or image, is assertiveness. So, here are some of the key techniques that you can use to make all of your communication more assertive.

5.1 Own Your Communication

It is very easy to say things to others without fully realising the effect they have. One of the most damaging is "You" messages where someone's actions make us feel a certain way, for example, "You make me so angry". These are known as "poison phrases" for the damage they do. Instead, when someone does something and it makes you feel a certain way, own your feelings: use "I" phrases, as in "When you come late, I feel cross".

5.2 Describe, Don't Judge

Judging others with labels is a trick that our ego teaches us when we are young. It is the ego's way of keeping people at a distance and so destroying good communication. Instead of judging someone, for example, "she's stupid", use honest and accurate communication devoid of judgment, as in "she makes mistakes about once or twice a week".

5.3 Be Specific, not Generalized

Sweeping statements are another category of communication that we often use but which are factually incorrect, as in "You're always late". Instead, think before you speak and use honest and accurate communication, as in "That's the second time you've been late this month".

5.4 Three Words to Eliminate from Your Communication

Here are three words that will improve your assertive communication if you leave them out.

a) "just", as in "I'm just a clerk"
b) "only", as in "She's only a housewife"
c) "try", as in "I'll try to have it to you by tonight".

Practise saying these sentences without the unassertive words and in a positive clear tone. Notice the difference.

5.5 Making Requests

Unassertive people hesitate about asking for something from others because they worry about how the request will be received, the possibility of rejection and how they will then be viewed.

Some of the fears might be...

- if they say "No", how will I feel?
- if they say "Yes", will I then owe them?
- if they say "Yes", might it be that they feel they have to?

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

This kind of self-talk is irrational and unnecessary if we make requests assertively. In the great majority of cases, people are pleased when others need their help and usually respond if the request is made in a way that does not make them feel they have no way to say "No".

Here are five steps in making assertive requests...

1. Check any contractual obligations others may have towards you, such as an earlier agreement to supply you with help.
2. Frame your request in a simple, straightforward way so that others know exactly what you're asking for.
3. Avoid manipulative and guilt-edged requests such as those from tin-carrying charity workers. eg "Would you like to help the poor?"
4. Instead make sure others have the right - and know they have the right - to say "Yes" or "No".
5. Avoid leading questions that give others no option but to agree: "There's not much on TV tonight. Do you want to go out?"

5.6 Asking for Time

Asking for time, as in "I'll have to see about that", is an assertive technique that can be useful in two ways. First, it avoids us turning others down with a flat "No". Second, it avoids saying an automatic "Yes" to other people's requests and conditions and so appearing to be an easy pushover. When we ask for time to think about a request, we let people know that we are taking the request seriously and need time to think. It also means we avoid saying "Yes" simply to please others and then becoming angry with them or ourselves because we didn't mean it. Naturally, when we've asked for time to think about a request, we should give the matter the thought it deserves and let people know our decision.

Is your recruitment website still missing a piece?

Bookboon can optimize your current traffic. By offering our free eBooks in your look and feel, we build a qualitative database of potential candidates.

Contact us to hear more
kbm@bookboon.com

bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

5.7 Fogging

"Fogging" is an assertive response to criticism and sarcasm. You can use it when someone makes a comment about you that is indirectly aggressive and intended to antagonise you, for example, when you arrive late to work and someone sarcastically says, "Train late again?". Simply take the words, find the truth in them and respond with an assertive tone, as in, "Yes, I'm going to have to re-think my journey from now on." Imagine taking the sarcasm or criticism and deadening it in a fog between you and the speaker.

5.8 Broken Record

"Broken record" takes its name from a stuck gramophone record. It is also known as "instant replay". Use it when someone wants you to do something that you don't want to do. Simply repeat what you want over and over again without becoming cross or raising your voice.

John: Let's eat out tonight. How about that new Mexican place?
Sally: Mexican food is too fattening. I'm sticking to my diet.
John: Yeah, but Mexican food is great.
Sally: I know it is but I'm sticking to my diet. We could go Japanese.
John: Look, one day off won't harm you.
Sally: Maybe not but I'm still going to stick to my diet.
John: I think it would do you good to loosen up.
Sally: I know what you mean, John, I really do. But I'm sticking to my diet.
John: Sally, nobody sticks to a diet!
Sally: I know a lot of people give in but I'm not.
John: OK, the truth is, I've got two free tickets to the Mexican place. So go on, come with me!
Sally: That's a real pity. If I hadn't been sticking to my diet, I would love to have come with you.
John: OK, Japanese it is, then!

5.9 Constructive Feedback

Constructive feedback is a way to tell someone what you liked or didn't like about them. It does it in a way that avoids being flattering on the one hand or critical on the other. The key to constructive feedback is to focus your comments on people's behaviour, not on them as individuals. This works because people can easily change what they do; they cannot change who they are.

Here are five ways to give feedback that is sincere and well-meant.

1. Tell people why you like something about them.
   "Jean, I like your haircut; it really sets off your eyes."
2. Use their name. "John, your shoes really go with that new suit of yours."
3. Use positive language.
   Not: "Too bad you missed out on the job."
   But: "I think you did very well to get an interview. What do you think you can do to turn it into an offer?"

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

4. Use a relayed positive. "Ali, I hear you're about the best person around on interview techniques. Can you help us...?"
5. Ask for someone's help or advice. "Fred, can you help us...?"

Most of our communication is the result of habit which, by being lazy and habitual, can damage relationships. Practise the above techniques and your communication and relationships will be transformed.

5.10 Key Points

1. Instead of blaming others for how they feel, the assertive person takes responsibility for their own feelings no matter what triggered them.
2. Assertive people may condemn what people do but never condemn what people are.
3. Assertive people hesitate to use words like "never" and "always" about others.
4. An assertive request may tell others how much you want something but doesn't force others to comply.
5. Asking for time is a useful way of not agreeing with what others want just to please them.
6. Fogging is a useful technique to respond to criticism because it agrees with any truth in the criticism.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

6 Managing Assertively

The role of the workplace manager has undergone profound changes in the past few years. Gone is the old-style manager who viewed people as a resource on the balance sheet and in has come a new-style manager who works through, with, and for others. This change is seismic. It is a change from controlling people as a cost to the business to treating them as the number one profit-producing resource. At the heart of this change is the way of managing assertively. Here are some of the features of this new style.

Turning a challenge into a learning curve.
Just another day at the office for a high performer.

Accenture Boot Camp – your toughest test yet

Choose Accenture for a career where the variety of opportunities and challenges allows you to make a difference every day. A place where you can develop your potential and grow professionally, working alongside talented colleagues. The only place where you can learn from our unrivalled experience, while helping our global clients achieve high performance. If this is your idea of a typical working day, then Accenture is the place to be.

It all starts at Boot Camp. It's 48 hours that will stimulate your mind and enhance your career prospects. You'll spend time with other students, top Accenture Consultants and special guests. An inspirational two days packed with intellectual challenges and activities designed to let you discover what it really means to be a high performer in business. We can't tell you everything about Boot Camp, but expect a fast-paced, exhilarating and intense learning experience. It could be your toughest test yet, which is exactly what will make it your biggest opportunity.

Find out more and apply online.

Visit accenture.com/bootcamp
• Consulting • Technology • Outsourcing

accenture
High performance. Delivered.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

6.1 Co-operation not Confrontation

Tom Peters describes the old-style manager as a "Nay-sayer" and the new-style manager as a "Yea-sayer". One kept people down, often through conflict and confrontation, and the other gets the best out of them, through understanding them first and co-operation.

6.2 Diversity not Sameness

If you look at any modern workplace, in comparison with the workplace of the past, you'll see a huge change in the make-up of the workforce. No longer is the predominant worker male, white and middle-class. Nor will they fit into one kind of work pattern. Increasingly, workforces are as diverse as the communities they serve. In such environments, the assertive manager treats everyone with the same respect regardless of background, origin, or personality.

"A pre-requisite of a switched-on organisation is perhaps the most difficult to achieve and that is openness of communication. It means a far greater tolerance of difference and a far greater respect for differences of view." (Sir John Harvey-Jones)

6.3 Fairness not Favouritism

One of the features of the modern workplace is the shift towards equalising opportunity. It is no longer about offering opportunities to those whose face fits but about treating everyone the same, even if they are different.

6.4 Power to Do, not Power to Impress

In the past, a manager's authority rested on his positional power. His status was enough to ensure his authority. Today, position carries less power. What matters is his or her ability to get things done.

6.5 Openness not Secrecy

Much of the change in workplaces over the last 50 years has arisen because of the shift from Industrial-based businesses to Information-based ones. The typical modern worker is not a manual worker working with their hands but a knowledge worker working with their brains. This has shifted power away from the hierarchy and to the workforce. Consequently, it is more important than ever to work with people not against them, to share not hide, and to be open and trusting, not secretive and suspicious.

6.6 Leaders not just Managers

The difference between leaders and managers is a difference in emphasis. While managers work with resources, leaders work with people. Resources are computable, but people need to be understood. Resources do what they're told, people respond to you as an individual and your ability to inspire and motivate.

6.6.1 Motivating the Team

Research shows that most team leaders use a variety of approaches when they want the team to do something. These include:

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

1. being vague: eg "We ought to be turning out more production."
2. using threats: eg "If you don't work more quickly, I'll have to report you."
3. giving reasons without engaging the workers: eg "If we miss the despatch date, the orders will be lost."
4. pleading: eg "Please finish the work more quickly, or I'll be in trouble."
5. bribing: eg "I'll see you have it easy tomorrow if you finish on time."
6. nice requests: eg "Would you please increase production by 12 %?"
7. being assertive: eg "The output has to increase by 12% in order to meet our plan. I'd like us to do it and I believe we can."

6.7 Integrity not Dictatorship

All of these shifts require managers to be of a different breed from the past. Their effectiveness relies on them having personal qualities such as integrity, honesty, and assertiveness. They are no longer characterised by being dictatorial, forceful, and controlling; but by being flexible, approachable, and open.

6.8 Outdated Models

In organisations whose management style is based on the models of the Industrial Revolution,...

- technology comes first, people come second
- the organisation resembles a machine which is controlled by management and only occasionally needs maintained
- people have fixed needs that can be manipulated by offering or withdrawing money
- managers are machine controllers
- power is hierarchical and concentrated at the top
- relationships are laid down by edict from the top and described on an organisation chart
- people do what they're told because managers have the power to make them.

6.9 New Modsels

In organisations whose management style is based on the models of the Information Revolution,...

- people come first; technology exists to serve people
- the organisation resembles a community of people like a large village
- people cannot be controlled without a price to pay
- people's value lies in what they know and how this knowledge can be used for the benefit of the customer
- everyone involved in the organisation is an equal stakeholder
- managers are leaders who create the conditions for growth
- power is anarchic because everyone has knowledge and so everyone has power
- relationships are determined by personal and interpersonal skills such as assertiveness.

Many of the skills needed of the modern manager rest on their ability to get the best out of others. They need to be excellent communicators and people workers. It is no wonder that the best modern managers are also assertive managers.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

6.10 Key Points

1. Old organisational models based on the industrial revolution and the military are being replaced by new models based on an assertive view of people .
2. A key difference in how people are managed today is the change from confrontation to co-operation.
3. The assertive manager sees the relationship with others as a win-win one, not a win-lose one.
4. One reason why management must change is the more diverse makeup of the workforce.
5. In today's business world, it matters far less who people are and far more what value they add.
6. sIn highly competitive environments, you cannot afford to treat your staff or customers badly.

The Wake
the only emission we want to leave behind
Low-speed Engines Medium-speed Engines Turbochargers Propellers Propulsion Packages PrimeServ
The design of eco-friendly marine power and propulsion solutions is crucial for MAN Diesel & Turbo.
Power competencies are offered with the world's largest engine programme – having outputs spanning
from 450 to 87,220 kW per engine. Get up front!
Find out more at www.mandieselturbo.com
Engineering the Future – since 1758.
MAN Diesel & Turbo
MAN
Download free eBooks at bookboon.com
Click on the ad to read more

7 Managing Conflict

Conflict is an ever-present feature in organisations where people work together. Conflict can arise in your job over differences of opinion; it can also arise on a personal level between people who don't get on. Often we feel that we have no choices in conflict. Like nations, if we are attacked we feel we only have the choice of attacking back or taking things lying down. But we do have choices. And those choices enable us to make the best decisions about how to respond. Here are the main choices in conflict.

7.1 Avoidance

Some people react to any kind of conflict by avoiding it. They blank it out, withdraw and take no part. Unfortunately, while this may be a useful move in calming things down, it also allows others to walk all over us. Avoiders are like snails. Whenever a conflict appears, they retreat into their shells. They often feel helpless and unhappy because they don't get what they want. Nor do they get close to others.

7.1.1 Yield and Bend

Yielding in the face of force can be a wise tactical move. It gives you the chance to wait until the dust settles and then come back to the issues at a better time. Doing this is like the water reed that bends in the storm and doesn't break, unlike the defiant oak that does.

Aesop tells the fable of the oak and the reeds...
"A very large oak was uprooted in a storm and fell into a stream amongst some reeds. The oak lamented to the reeds: "I wonder how you, who are so light, and weak are not entirely crushed by these strong winds."

The reeds replied to the oak:
"You fight and contend with the wind and consequently are destroyed; we on the contrary bend before the least breath of air and so remain unbroken and survive."

7.2 Direct Aggression

Aggression often feels like the only option when faced with aggression from someone else, particularly if your rights or those you care about are under threat. However, direct aggression as a response to conflict suggests you are not interested in the views of the other side and are only interested in winning the day. Aggressive people are like tigers who do not take No for an answer. They believe there is only winning and losing and they must win. If they lose, they feel weak and worthless.

7.2.1 Indirect Aggression

Overt aggression is easy to spot and acknowledge but often aggression takes a less obvious guise. Indirect aggression can appear in many ways, such as putting people and their ideas down, lecturing them, offering unwanted advice, prying, and nagging. It is still a way of saying, "my ideas and what I want are more important than your ideas and what you want".

Put-downs are an indirect way of behaving aggressively. They include the following...

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

1. Nagging: “Haven’t you finished yet?”
2. Prying: “I’m not being nosey, but that wasn’t your husband I saw you with last night, was it?”
3. Lecturing: “That’s not the way to do it, stupid; move over and let me show you.”
4. Putting people on the spot: “You’re not busy right now, are you...?”
5. Questioning your choice: “Are you sure that dress is right?”
6. Offering unwanted advice: “If I were you...”
7. Insulting labels: “I know you’re just a woman, but...”
8. Amateur psychologist: “I doubt you two will hit it off what with your temperaments.”

Bullying can be defined in similar ways to definitions of aggression as “an emotion, intention or act of behaviour to hurt or harm someone or something in a socially unacceptable way.” The dictionary defines bullying as “the cruel oppression of the weak”. Bullying as workplace aggression is likely to exist in two forms: as a personal issue between one employee and another, in which case it must be brought to the attention of the team or management; and as an unwarranted and unacceptable way for a manager to treat his or her staff. When managers bully their staff, they are likely to do so in ways which allow them to think they can get away with it. Their victims are invariably people whom they see as weak. The only way to handle such unpleasant behaviour is for those on the receiving end to think and act assertively.

7.3 Accommodation

Accommodators are people whose response to conflict is to find some middle ground that will solve the conflict. It may mean splitting the spoils down the middle, taking something for yourself and giving something to the other side. Of course, not all conflicts can be solved this way and this approach can leave people feeling that while something has been gained, something has also been lost. Accommodators are like foxes. Foxes look for a middle ground in which they can gain something from a conflict. They dislike extremes and prefer a settlement even if it is likely that the more powerful will soon be back for more.

7.4 Assertiveness

Assertiveness is the best way to manage conflict. The assertive principles of standing up for oneself while acknowledging the rights of others mean that both tactically and strategically the assertive person always has a win-win solution to conflict in their mind. Their solution is always about wisdom never force. Assertive people are like owls. They see the whole situation from both points of view. They aim for a resolution to conflict based on wisdom, not force.

It is inevitable that, whether you’re a manager or team player, you will face conflict in the workplace either as part of your job role or as part of your relationships with others. The key to managing it successfully is to approach it not as a negative and destructive process but as a positive and constructive one.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

7.5 Key Points

1. You manage conflict when, instead of reacting in a habitual knee-jerk way, you are aware that you have choices.
2. Avoidance of conflict may work as a tactical and temporary move but not as a strategic and long-term move.
3. Aggression, as the end result of conflict, is never a satisfactory way to resolve it as those on the receiving end will seek revenge.
4. The best way to respond to bullies is to be assertive.
5. Accommodation means that both sides in a conflict come out with less than they really want.
6. An assertive approach to conflict is one that works towards a win-win resolution.

Brain power
By 2020, wind could provide one-tenth of our planet's electricity needs. Already today, SKF's innovative know-how is crucial to running a large proportion of the world's wind turbines.
Up to 25 % of the generating costs relate to maintenance. These can be reduced dramatically thanks to our systems for on-line condition monitoring and automatic lubrication. We help make it more economical to create cleaner, cheaper energy out of thin air.
By sharing our experience, expertise, and creativity, industries can boost performance beyond expectations.
Therefore we need the best employees who can meet this challenge!
The Power of Knowledge Engineering
Plug into The Power of Knowledge Engineering.
Visit us at www.skf.com/knowledge
SKF
Download free eBooks at bookboon.com
Click on the ad to read more

8 Social Confidence

Social confidence is the application of assertive ways of behaving to situations outside work. One of the most important uses of social confidence is in meeting new people and becoming friends. Here are some of the assertive ways to do it.

8.1 Conversational Openers

If you want to strike up a conversation with someone you don't know, perhaps at a social function, the best starting point is to talk about their number one subject, them. Your first question should not be too open that they don't know where to start, nor too closed that you don't get much free information in their reply. A good format to use is the statement-plus-question format, as in "You look new here. Can I help you?"

8.2 Keeping a Conversation Going

The best conversation openers are those which open up a flow of information. They should not be too open that people don't know how to reply: eg "How's things?"; nor too difficult for an easy reply: eg "What are you hoping to gain from this course, then?". If someone is willing to keep a conversation going with you, you'll get some free information from them that you should pick up on. For example,

You:"I see from your name tag that you work for a charity. Are you based here?"
Them: "No, I'm based in London. But I'm abroad a lot."
You: "That must be interesting. What countries?"

8.3 Active Listening

The technique of listening for "free information", picking up on it, and then moving a conversation on with it shows that you are listening actively to others. When you listen actively and with empathy, you immediately make yourself more attractive to others. A conversation then becomes a sort of dance, with one person leading and the other one following.

8.3.1 We're Not Listening

JIM: Boy, Dad, I've had it up to here with school.
DAD: Why's that?
JIM: Oh, it just seems a waste of time.
DAD: Well, we all feel like that sometimes. I did. Just give it time.
JIM: I don't see why I can't be like Joe. He's got a job at the garage and is making big money.
DAD: Well, you're not like Joe. Joe's missed out on the rest of his education. You don't want to end up like Joe.
JIM: There's nothing wrong with Joe.
DAD: I didn't say there was. It's just that you're not going to throw away a good education...after everything we've sacrificed for you.
JIM: Well, I never asked you to...
DAD: Look, maybe if you spent a bit more time doing school work instead of watching TV...
JIM: Look, Dad...It's no good...Oh...forget it. I don't want to talk about it anyway.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

8.3.2 Empathic Listening

JIM: Boy, Dad, I've had it up to here with school!
DAD: You've had enough of school?
JIM: I sure have. It's just a waste of time.
DAD: So you feel you're getting nowhere?
JIM: Well, yes. I mean, look at Joe. He's left school and earning big money at the garage. That's more like work.
DAD: You think paid work is more important than schooling?
JIM: Well, not exactly. It's just that sometimes I think I'd be better off not at school.
DAD: Sometimes? Like when?
JIM: Well, today, I suppose. I got a pretty stupid mark in Maths this morning.
DAD: I see. Do you think you should leave school for one bad mark?
JIM: No, I suppose not. Maybe I'll stick in a bit longer. Hey, Dad, thanks for listening.

8.4 Positive Feedback

Once you've entered into conversation with someone, the exchange can move up a gear if you give positive feedback to the other person. The trick is to do it without flattery or pretence. This can be a comment from you about something that the other person tells you by way of free information. When you comment positively, you are seen as sympathetic, understanding, and likeable.

One of the most characteristic features of assertive people is their willingness to say something positive about others without expecting something in return. There are a number of benefits that come from giving others positive feedback. First, the compliment acts as a reward. So, the more you let others know what you like, the more you'll get it in future. Secondly, when you express how you feel, others are more likely to open up to you. Finally, giving praise creates a climate in which people can learn about themselves.

8.5 Safe Disclosure

People don't reveal too much about themselves in social situations unless they feel safe. Disclosing facts, then views, and then feelings is a gradual process. One way to make progress with self-disclosures is to go at the other person's pace, only revealing personal information at the rate they do.

8.6 Presenting Yourself

To be more attractive, learn some tricks of self-presentation. First, be specific about yourself. Not, "I'm a technician" but "I've just started at the hospital as a technician". Second, don't paint a perfect picture of yourself, add a few flaws. Not, "I was top of my year" but "I didn't do too well at first but then I had a great teacher who helped me get a first". Third, paint word pictures to describe your feelings. Not, "I was nervous" but "My knees were knocking".

8.7 Avoiding Controversy

The sure-fire way to kill a new friendship dead is to take opposite sides on a controversial topic. If the conversation turns to a controversial issue, don't take a stand until you hear the other person's point of view. In reply, put both sides of the case and you'll sound fair and wise. Later on, when they know you better, you can share your own point of view.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

It is one of the facts of life that the more confident you are in social situations, the more successful you will be in making new friends and contacts. But this should never be over-confidence. Follow the 7 tips above and you'll hit the right note.

8.8 Key Points

1. Social assertiveness helps us make contact with others and build mutually advantageous relationships.
2. The best way to progress when you meet someone new is to ask them about themselves.
3. The best conversation openers are those that open up a flow of information about someone else.
4. The way to keep a conversation going with someone new is to pick up on the free snippets of information they let slip.
5. When you are positive towards others, you come across as sympathetic and likeable.
6. When we follow feedback with a question, we take the sting out of criticism and the embarrassment out of praise.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

9 Assertive Roles at Work

Assertiveness is a skill that can be practised every day in the workplace. Whether we wear a number of hats, or only one, there are ample opportunities to practise and perfect our assertive communication with others. Here are 9 assertive workplace roles.

9.1 The Assertive Appraiser

Assertive appraisers use the appraisal process not to criticise their staff but to find ways to build them up and get better performance. They don't rate their own views as any more important than the views of their appraisees. They are expert at giving positive feedback.

9.2 The Assertive Boss

Assertive bosses value their staff as their key productive resource. They respect confidentialities and never spread rumour or gossip. They know that, while their position gives them authority, it is their behaviour that earns them respect.

9.3 The Assertive Chairperson

Assertive chairs run meetings with a fair and firm hand. They allow all views to be heard, giving equal time to the outspoken as much as the reticent. Assertive chairs actively seek out minority views. Their aim is to serve the group not themselves.

9.4 The Assertive Communicator

Assertive communicators live up to the maxim of "first understand, then be understood". This means having highly skilled listening skills as well as the ability to put their point of view across clearly and succinctly.

9.5 The Assertive Customer-Carer

The assertive customer-carer respects the right of customers to receive a good service or product. When faced with angry customers who feel they have been cheated, they do not blame the company or colleagues, but work hard to find win-win solutions to the problem.

9.6 The Assertive Recruiter

Assertive recruiters do not abuse their role as selectors. They do not embarrass candidates, put them down, or put them under pressure. Instead, they do what they can to get the best out of them.

9.7 The Assertive Team Leader

Assertive team leaders articulate the goals, values, and beliefs of the organisation. They do not expect others to do things they would not do themselves. They know everyone in their teams well. They know when to lead from the front and when to lead from behind.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

9.8 The Assertive Negotiator

The assertive negotiator acts in the best interests of the organisation. They are not easily browbeaten by the tactics of the other side and know that the best deal is one where both sides get everything they are aiming for.

9.9 The Assertive Employee

The assertive employee recognises that they have both rights and responsibilities in the workplace. They assert their rights calmly and fulfil their responsibilities by making the fullest contribution possible to their team.

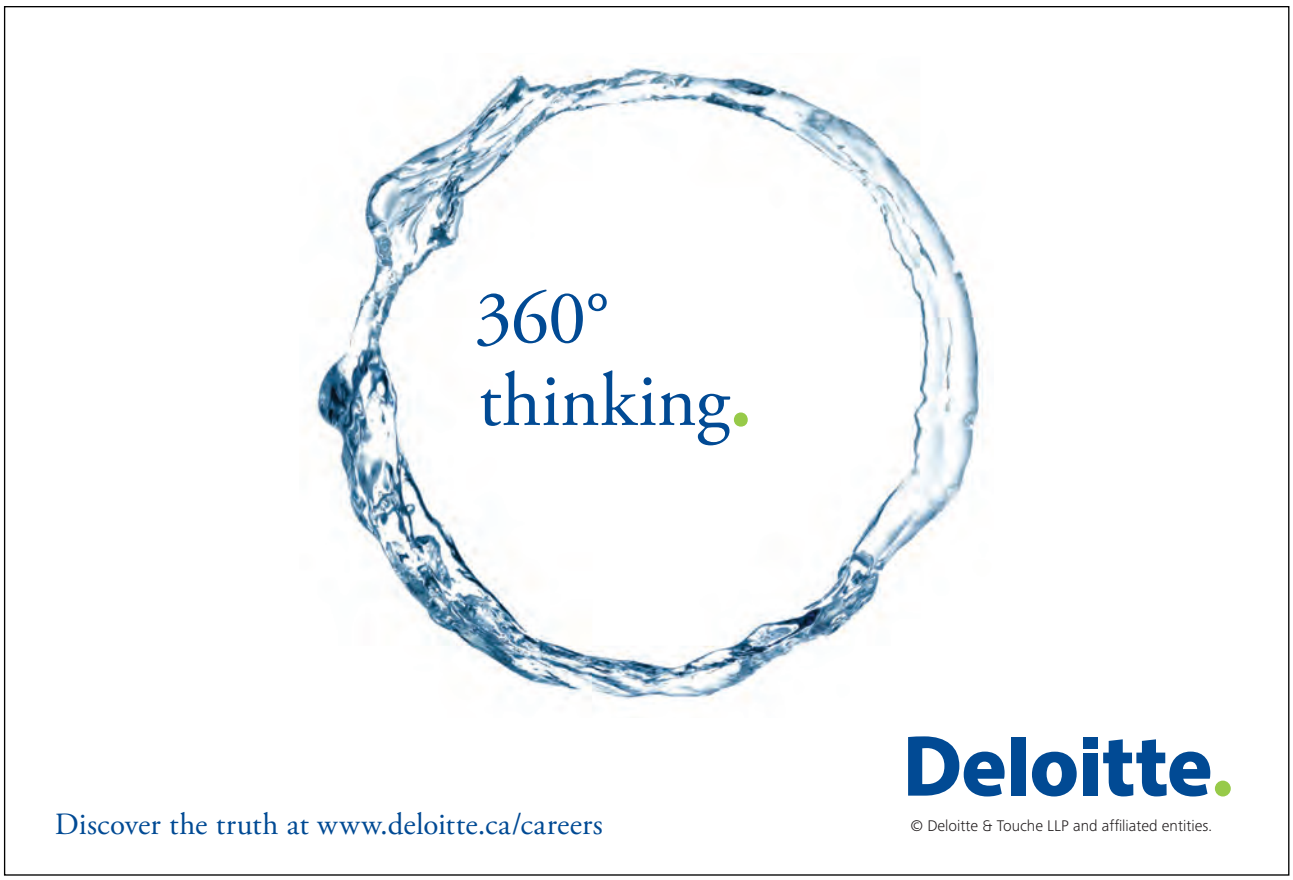
9.10 Key Points

1. Assertive appraisers are skilled in giving constructive feedback.
2. Assertive bosses know that, while their position gives them authority, their behaviour gives them respect.
3. Assertive chairs of meetings are ready to shut down the talkative and encourage the reticent.
4. Assertive communicators aim first to understand then be understood.
5. Assertive counsellors do not shy away from confronting people about their problems.
6. Assertive customer-carers know how to defuse and calm a situation down.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

10 Assertiveness Training

Assertiveness training is the best way to deal with those situations, both in and out of work, where you feel you lack confidence. It is a way of un-hooking yourself from the learned behaviours of the past and re-programming yourself to be more assertive. Here are some of those re-programming techniques.



Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

10.1 Watch Your Self-Talk

It is often the self-talk that goes through our heads that determines how we behave in different situations. Let's say you had an experience in your early career where you were heavily criticised by your boss in his office. Now every time you are summoned to your boss's office, your brain re-plays the earlier experience. Your self-talk takes you back to the earlier incident and you deal with it in the same way. Only by training yourself to change the old self-talk can you break out of this cycle.

"We have learned during our upbringing how to protect ourselves from danger, rejection, ridicule, disgust and other undesirable responses to our behaviour. We have developed a "socially acceptable" way of being. Sometimes we call this good manners, or politeness, or conformity, or being inhibited, all of which serve to keep us safe. But learning is about adventure. It is about lowering the barriers and allowing ourselves the freedom to be different from how we might normally be. Unless we are able to do this, our learning will be limited and narrow and has to fit who we have become rather than who we are." (Trevor Bentley)

10.2 Use the ABC Technique

The ABC technique is a useful way to break old patterns of behaviour. The A stands for the Activating event or incident; the B for the Beliefs you have about it; and the C for the Consequences. Taking the incident above, you cannot change the Activating event but you can change your beliefs. Now, instead of a belief that this is a bad experience, tell yourself that this is a good one. As a result the consequences will be different.

10.3 Set a New Trigger

Triggers are a good way to put you into the assertive state you desire. First, recall a time when you felt and behaved confidently. Re-call it in your mind's eye in minute detail, from mood to body language, tone of voice to feelings. Now choose a trigger. It could be the phone call to go to your boss's office. It could be clenching your fingers. Now, every time you experience the trigger, associate the assertive state. In time, you will have set up a new connection of desired experiences.

Here are the steps in accessing resourceful states.

1. identify the unsatisfactory situation you want to change. Find a cue that particularly sets you off into aggressive or non-assertive modes.
2. Identify the assertive state you'd like to be in. This could be relaxed, calm, articulate, confident. Think about the voice tone, the body language and the movements you make.
3. Check you really want it in this situation.
4. Now think of a previous time when you experienced this state.
5. Re-experience the state in all its representations: how you spoke, how you sat, how you looked and so on. Re-experience it at its peak.
6. Connect the old experience with the new one that you want to change. Find a simple cue or trigger that tells you to access the resourceful state.
7. Test that it works and then try it out in the real situation.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

10.4 Anchors

Anchors are signs that we use to put ourselves in a desired state, such as Assertiveness. They are the triggers to resourceful, relaxed and focused attention. Anchors may be visual, auditory or sensate (touch, feel, taste and smell). So, for example, we might anchor a feeling of excited anticipation when we see the clock at 9.30 on the morning of an important meeting. Or we might anchor the state to the voice of the receptionist or the smell of the polished boardroom table. Many sports people use anchors to get themselves grounded in the right mental attitude. Some touch lucky mascots before they go out to play; some shout a chant like the New Zealand All Blacks performing the "hakka" before a rugby match; tennis players make sure the ball bounces in the correct way before they serve.

10.5 Musts into Preferences

The survival mechanisms of our early years programme us with the "musts" that we believe are the key to winning back the love and approval of others: I must work hard; I must succeed; I must be strong and so on. The "musts" stay with us throughout our whole lives exerting a greater or lesser influence over us. The trouble with "musts" is that they are outside our control and we can never hope to satisfy them.

By mentally changing a "must" into a preference, three things happen...

1. We are in control. Not "I must" but "I prefer to work tonight."
2. We don't get unhappy if things don't work out.
3. We can shrug our shoulders and walk away. "I prefer to be strong in this situation, but, if not, oh, well..."

10.6 Hold On Tightly...

When we re-phrase our "musts" into preferences or "wishes", we can "hold on tightly and let go lightly". This means we should go for the very best we can by working for what we want: holding on tightly. But if these things don't come about, for reasons which we cannot control or for mistakes we make or just that we decide it's no longer worth it, we should simply let them go as easily as releasing a balloon into the sky: letting go lightly.

"I hold on tightly to seek the best options available to me and this enables me to avoid a victim consciousness. To fully play the game of life, I go for what I want. But if life isn't giving it to me, I can let go lightly. By changing my demands into preferences, I increasingly live life with relaxed enjoyment. No more beating my head against the brick wall of "what is". (Ken Keyes)

10.7 Work on Your Self-Esteem

You can always do work on your self-esteem, particularly whenever you feel low. Love yourself fully, warts and all. See your imperfections only as the things that make you more human. Never, never compare yourself with others. Value your uniqueness.

It is always tempting for unassertive people to believe that either they are born without any special gifts or that they have to work harder than others to develop them. Not so.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

"The Wise are Who They Are. They work with what they've got and do what they can do. There are things about ourselves that we need to get rid of; there are things we need to change. But, at the same time, we do not need to be too desperate, too ruthless, too combative. Along the way to usefulness and happiness, many of those things will change themselves and the others can be worked on as we go. The first thing we need to do is recognize and trust our own Inner Nature and not lose sight of it. For within the Ugly Duckling is the Swan. Inside the Bouncy Tigger is the Rescuer who knows the Way and in each of us is something Special and that we need to keep." (Benjamin Hoff: "The Tao of Pooh")

10.8 Practise Affirmations

An affirmation is a written description of the assertive "you" you want to be such as, "I am confident in every team meeting" or "I handle every meeting with the boss well". Practise speaking these affirmations out loud and at the same time feel the feelings you want to go with them. According to one researcher, just reading an affirmation has only a 10% impact on changing us; reading and picturing the affirmation in a real situation has a 55% impact; reading, picturing and feeling the emotions of the new situation we want has a 100% impact.

10.9 Practise Visualisations

Visualisation has a powerful effect in re-programming the way we handle key situations. Simply close your eyes in a relaxed state and play out any incident where you want to be more assertive in your mind's eye. It is like a video that you can play and re-play as often as you want.

A study at the University of Moncton in New Brunswick, Canada, tested spelling skills on students. Those students who first visualised the spellings achieved 35% more correct spellings than those who did not. Some students who visualised obtained a total recall of the words.

MSM
MAASTRICHT SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
Increase your impact with MSM Executive Education
For almost 60 years Maastricht School of Management has been enhancing the management capacity of professionals and organizations around the world through state-of-the-art management education.
Our broad range of Open Enrollment Executive Programs offers you a unique interactive, stimulating and multicultural learning experience.
Be prepared for tomorrow's management challenges and apply today.
For more information, visit www.msm.nl or contact us at +31 43 38 70 808 or via admissions@msm.nl
the globally networked management school

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more

10.10 Get a Role Model

All successful people have role models. Alexander the Great had Achilles. Stravinsky had Mozart. American Blues singer Ray Charles modelled himself on Nat King Cole. When you learn from an assertive role model, don't just copy their outward behaviour. Try to think and feel like them and get into their frames of reference. Role models of assertiveness might include real people whom you know and work with, historical figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Joan of Arc and the disabled champion Helen Keller; or cartoon characters like Popeye.

Situations in which you perform badly through lack of confidence can be the bane of your life. Through re-programming yourself to behave in ways that make you feel good, you can undo the experiences of the past and set yourself free.

10.11 Scripting

Scripting is a way to turn your non-assertive situations into mini-plays which you can then act out and rehearse until you are confident that they show you in an assertive way. In scripting, you can actually write down what you and others might say, ensuring that your replies are assertive. You can then add stage directions so that your movements and body language are also assertive. Once you have a script ready, you can use a group to help you walk it through, chalk it through or talk it through. You can also use visualisation techniques to rehearse the scenes in your head.

10.12 Key Points

1. One reason for wanting to become more assertive is to change confrontational relationships.
2. Assertiveness training re-programmes the blame and life script strategies which we learn from childhood.
3. Rational emotive therapy allows us to choose how to react in different life situations .
4. When we exchange the "musts" in our life for preferences, we take control of how we want to be.
5. To avoid being a victim of what life throws at us, we can learn to go for what we want but, if we don't get it, to let go lightly.
6. Instead of letting our self-talk lead us into downward spirals of panic, we can interrupt the cycle and create positive reactions instead.

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Web Resources on Assertiveness

The following instantly-accessible website resources provide more in-depth information on some of the tips, techniques, and features in this book.

Here is a one-page pdf definition of Assertiveness from JPM Life innovations that you could use as a handout on any Assertiveness course:
http://www.jpmlifeinnovations.com/files/Assertive Behavior.pdf

This pdf from cfilc will give you a full list of assertiveness techniques including positive assertion:
http://www.cfilc.org/atf/cf/%7B375FB041-9EF3-45D4-A3A0-9AB4F22F57F1%7D/Assertiveness Handouts.pdf

Here, from therapy-now.com, are "10 Things To Do To Be More Assertive" including "Asking for Time":
http://www.therapy-now.com/assertiveness.html

Here is an excellent slideshow from Wisc-Online which shows you how to assertively manage conflict:
http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/ViewObject.aspx?ID=PHR300

Find out how to manage assertively on the ehow website here:
http://www.ehow.com/about_6138156_assertive-management-training.html

Here are Virginia Satir's "Five Freedoms" and a beautiful poster to go with it:
http://nynke.wordpress.com/2009/03/30/five-freedoms/

Take the Assertiveness quiz to see how you handle conflict on about.com:
http://stress.about.com/library/assertiveness_quiz/bl_assertiveness_quiz.htm

Here is an explanation from LJA Learning of Eric Berne's theory of Transactional Analysis and our 3 Ego States:
http://www.ljalearning.co.uk/about_us/news_stories/transactional_analysis_p1.htm

Learn how to be an assertive manager with Meryl Runion's article here:
http://www.articlesbase.com/ethics-articles/how-to-be-the-assertive-manager-your-employees-want-to-produce-results-for-management-skill-training-tips-for-effective-communication-208810.html

Take 18 minutes to view Professor Jeffrey Berman's Listening Skill video here:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7AxNI3PhvBo

View 10 examples of Assertiveness from the Centre of Confidence and Well-Being here:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ymm86c6DAF4

Download free eBooks at bookboon.com

Start your day with positive affirmations in this youtube video here:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXGwhjUQzrY

Download over 20 Assertiveness training and learning products from ManageTrainLearn here:
http://www.managetrainlearn.com/products/assertiveness/

See the light!
The sooner you realize we are right, the sooner your life will get better!

A bit over the top? Yes we know!

We are just that sure that we can make your media activities more effective.

Get "Bookboon's Free Media Advice"
Email kbm@bookboon.com

bp CREDIT SUISSE DAIMLER Unilever Microsoft bookboon.com

Click on the ad to read more